

**The Habitat Conservation Blueprint,
A Practical Plan for Community-Based
Conservation/Restoration Efforts**

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THE HABITAT CONSERVATION BLUEPRINT, A PRACTICAL PLAN FOR COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION / RESTORATION EFFORTS

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The Galveston Bay Foundation, a nonprofit, member-supported, conservation organization, has produced the Habitat Conservation Blueprint, which is a practical, site-specific plan to guide community efforts to restore/conserv valuable habitat in the GB system. The HCB builds on the work of the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, with its goal of creating or restoring 15,000 acres of vegetated marine, estuarine, and shoreline wetland habitat by the year 2004. It is also part of a national effort to restore 1,000,000 acres of estuarine habitat by the year 2010 as part of an alliance of regional estuary groups, *Restore America's Estuaries*.

The core of the Habitat Conservation Blueprint is an inventory of about 200 potential conservation/restoration sites. These data are a compilation of existing databases and interviews with numerous people with first-hand knowledge of the Galveston Bay area. An educational document was produced and widely-distributed in May 1998, which informed readers about general issues of concern, described various restoration strategies, and listed specific sites from the inventory. The booklet was also used at 7 local, facilitated public meetings, where input was collected on community priorities on the inventoried sites.

A technical resource document was also produced, which included the inventory of prioritized site descriptions and recommended conservation/restoration strategies. It was created to assist in regional planning for conservation/restoration efforts. It also serves as a ready list of projects for any interested party whether for mitigation, habitat creation, enhancement or academic purposes. It provides information on geographic location, habitat types, physical size, and relative measures of the educational, economic and conservation strengths of each proposed project. The input from the public meetings also furnished an indication of the level of community support for projects.

In addition to the site inventory, the technical resource document provided a matrix of over 120 available resources (financial and technical), which were categorized by several criteria in order to facilitate matching conservation/restoration projects with resources. With the goal of restoring 24,000 acres by 2010, GBF is actively working to match high-priority sites with available resources and partners.